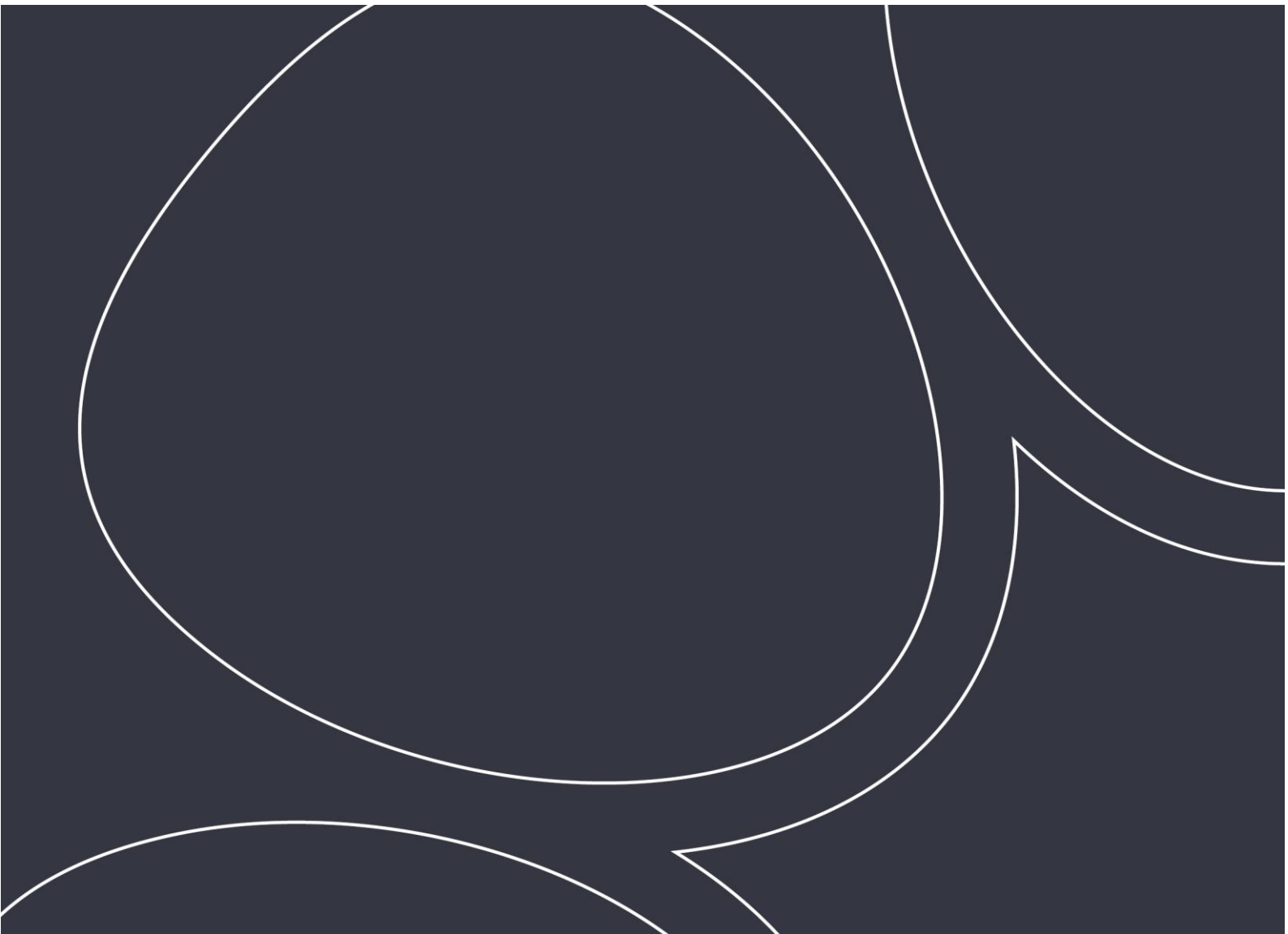


# After Care Support

## Policy



<b>Document title</b>	After Care Support
<b>Contact details</b>	Department of Children and Families Operational Policy <a href="mailto:DCF.Policy@nt.gov.au">DCF.Policy@nt.gov.au</a>
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Version	Date	Author	Changes made
1.0	19/06/2020	Operational Policy	First version - Replaces Policy: Leaving Care and After Care Support. Separation of After Care Support and Transition to Independence material. Policy informs staff about After Care Support. Separate policy available for Transition to Independence.
2.0	04/09/2025	Operational Policy	Aligned with Transition to Independence Policy to reflect amendments to s85A and 85B of the Act.  Corporate rebranding, plain language revisions and replacements: Department of Children and Families replaces Territory Families. Additional headings added: Scope; Accessing ACS; ACS eligibility; staff responsibilities; financial considerations; personal items. Policy statement tightened to reflect the Department's assessment process of determining support. Included TIPL responsibilities in sub-section 3.3.1.

Acronym	Full form
ACS	After Care Support
ACW	Aboriginal community worker
APA	Aboriginal practice advisor
BSU	Business Support Unit
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CMS	Client management system

ITRC	Intensive Therapeutic Residential Care
Practitioner	Child protection practitioner
RFSW	Remote family support worker
the Act	Care and Protection of Children Act 2007
the Department	Department of Children and Families
TIL	Transition to independent living
TIPL	Transition to independence practice leader
TTI	Transition to independence

Term	Definitions
A young person who has left the care of the CEO	<p>A person who is between 15–25 years of age, has left the CEO’s care, was last in the CEO’s care continuously for at least six months, and is unlikely to return to care in the future.</p> <p>Exceptions may apply for children who were in care for several years, reunified with family and returned to care for less than six months.</p>

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## 1. Purpose

This policy requires the Department of Children and Families (the Department) to support young people until the age of 25 after leaving the care of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

The Department aims to support care leavers through After Care Support (ACS), designed to promote long-term stability for young people. The policy sets a practice framework to make sure young people participate throughout Transition to Independence (TTI) care planning and are informed about ACS.

## 2. Scope

This policy is for young people accessing ACS, young people in care aged 15–17 planning their transition to independence, all Department staff who help deliver ACS, carers, and legal guardians.

## 3. Policy statement

The Department is committed to supporting young people after they leave the CEO's care to help them lead stable, successful lives. Under Section 68 and Part 2.2, Division 5 (Transition to independence) of the *Care and Protection of Children Act 2007* (the Act), the Department must support young people who have left the CEO's care (refer to term table).

ACS is part of the Department's service delivery for young people who have left the CEO's care. The supports available include a variety of goods and services because young people have diverse needs. Support will depend on the young person's circumstances and is based on what the Department thinks is fair and reasonable.

Before a young person leaves care, they must have a TTI care plan. This refers to a care plan as defined by Section 70 and 71 of the Act and be informed about ACS. If a young person has left care and does not have a TTI care plan, it does not preclude them from accessing ACS.

### 3.1. Accessing After Care Support

A young person can access ACS in two ways:

- by continuing their TTI care plan; or
- by contacting the Department after leaving care.

As one way for young people to access ACS is from their TTI care plan, TTI care plans must record short term, and longer-term needs from 18 to 25 years of age.

### 3.2. After Care Support eligibility

ACS has three main eligibility criteria:

1. Participation is voluntary and requires the young person or their legal guardian's consent.
2. The young person must meet the legal definition of a [person who has left the care of the CEO](#) under Section 68 of the Act (refer to team table for exceptions).

3. The young person must have been under a direction of Section 123 of the Act:
  - A daily care and control direction.
  - A short-term parental responsibility direction.
  - A long-term parental responsibility direction.

A young person may be allowed to access ACS even if they do not meet all the eligibility criteria. A financial delegate can make this decision.

### 3.3. After Care Support for young people

The Department's support will vary depending on the young person's circumstances. After Care Support is based on what the Department considers to be fair and reasonable and may include:

- living support.
- accommodation assistance.
- information about services and resources.
- education or training.
- health and counselling services.

The Department must provide practical and financial assistance to young people who leave the CEO's care to maintain suitable living and support arrangements. This may include:

- extended carer payments so a young person can continue living with their carer.
- assistance to connect a young person with family and community.
- help to pay for essential household items.
- education and employment opportunities.

The Department must support a young person's living arrangements until they have completed their course of study. This applies to young people who attend a course while they are in care and are continuing the course after turning 18 years of age. These arrangements must be recorded in the TTI care plan.

If a young person who has left the CEO's care is at risk of significant harm, the CEO may request prioritised access to services from a public authority under Section 43 of the Act.

Young people who have left care who do not have a continuing TTI care plan can access ACS by contacting the Department. When this happens, the Department will assess the young person's needs, having regard for their situation, safety, and wellbeing.

A young person who has left the CEO's care may have their belongings provided to them at no cost, whether from the Department, or anyone who was an approved carer or a placement provider under Section 86 of the Act.

## 3.4. Responsibilities

### 3.4.1. Practitioners and transition to independence practice leaders (TIPLs)

Practitioners are responsible for supporting young people to access after care supports that are assessed as required to assist a young person and support their transition to independent living after they leave the care of the CEO. This includes processing financial requests or where ongoing case management is required, support the young person to develop and After Care Support Plan setting out the young person's needs, goals and actions to be taken to meet the young persons after care support needs. Transition to independence practice leaders work alongside practitioners to influence best practice approaches to the provision of after care support services to young people who have left the care of the CEO.

### 3.4.2. Cultural staff

Cultural staff in the Department act as advisors in case work decisions for Aboriginal young people and young adults. They provide expert advice on cultural matters that may impact a young person and their communities' engagement, decision-making, and outcomes.

Aboriginal staff can include:

- Aboriginal practice advisors (APA)
- Remote family support workers (RFSW)
- Senior Aboriginal community workers (SACWs)
- Aboriginal community workers (ACWs).

## 4. Legislative basis

[Care and Protection of Children Act 2007](#)

Sections 85A, 85B and 86 of the Act outlines the support a young person can access while in care and after leaving care until 25 years of age.

## 5. Related documents

This policy must be read with other related documents, including but not limited to:

[Aboriginal Cultural Security Framework](#)

[After Care Support Practice Guidance](#)

[Transition to Independence Policy](#)

[Transition to Independence Practice Guidance](#)

[Care Planning Policy](#)